

**HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE CORPORATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY, STANDARDS & CURRICULUM PLANNING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2019**



708 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

708.1 Attendance, Apologies for Absence & Membership

Membership: Tony Medhurst
Philomena Shaughnessy
Charlotte Simmonds
Jan Wing (Chair)

In Attendance: Mike Carver
Jayne Chaplin (Clerk)
Wayne Wright

Apologies: Sarah King

Absent: Nathan Daech Green
Ricky Irons
Luke Taylor

708.2 Declarations of Interest & Confidential Items

There were no Declarations of Interest and it was **RESOLVED** for Item 2 to be taken as a Part 2 Confidential Item

708.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

708.4 Matters Arising

With all matters covered on the agenda, there were no matters arising on which to report.

709 IN-YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING: REPORTS FOR REVIEW OR APPROVAL

709.1 Quality Improvement & Curriculum Development

709.1.1 Strategic Objectives & Curriculum Development: Update

A report was presented providing an update on the year to date position for the 2018/19 strategic objectives.

After providing an overview of curriculum developments and acknowledging the indicative nature of likely success the data represented, there was an update on:

- The year to date Retention rate for all learners of 97.68%, representing an improvement of 1.43% on the same point in the previous year.
- Year to date Attendance at 86.23% against an aspirational attendance target of 100% and expected attendance of 90%. Whilst acknowledged to be below target, it was noted to be a 3% improvement on the figure recorded for the same point in the previous year with overall attendance for 16-18 learners and adult learners the same.

After recognising and commending the improvements overall, members reviewed the analysis of rates by directorate and curriculum area:

- Discussing the 16 of the 22 curriculum areas with rates above 97%. Querying where rates recorded were lowest, the 96.95%, recorded for Service Industries was scrutinised, noting however that this represented an improvement of 0.88% on the same period in the previous year and was encouraging with Achievement then the highest in the Directorate. Observing that Achievement was generally lowest in STEM, there was note of the 2.96% improvement to 97.89% representing the largest increase, although need was acknowledged to treat performance with caution.
- Noting Attendance to be lowest in the STEM directorate, at 80%. Querying the recording of and follow-up processes for absence, confirmation was welcomed of regular contact with students by curriculum areas, including their parents/guardians if necessary; along with use of positive engagement meetings and the student disciplinary process to improve performance. Then responding to further inquiry regarding the ways in which members could more independently monitor progress, it was agreed that access to reports could be provided along with inviting curriculum managers to future meetings to provide opportunities to engage in more direct discussion of performance and improvement.

Following review, the report was noted

709.1.2 Ofsted Monitoring Visit: Report

A report was received formally confirming the outcome of the Ofsted Monitoring Visit undertaken in November 2018 and reported upon orally at the previous meeting. Members were advised that after reviewing progress in those areas previously identified by Ofsted for attention, the Report confirmed 'reasonable progress' for the first three themes, and 'significant progress' for the fourth.

In the context of previous discussions and as one of the themes reviewed during the Visit, there was an oral update on the provision of work experience:

- Providing confirmation of the more robust processes in place with a more proactive, inventive and creative approach to the making and utilising of opportunities.
- Reporting specifically on the College's participant in a work placement pilot as part of and in the lead up to the introduction of T Levels. After acknowledging the merits and benefits of the pilot, members were advised of the challenges experienced in the securing of placements, particularly with the volume of micro-businesses in the region, and the reporting requirements in place, exacerbated by ongoing changes in requirements and expectations.

After observing Ofsted's conclusions confirmed the trajectory of progress and the right strategies to be in place to secure performance improvement, the report was noted.

709.1.3 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP): Update

The College QIP was presented showing year to date progress.

After observing discussion elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 709.1.1 refers), the year-to-date position was reviewed. Progress was noted to be good overall with actions providing early evidence of emerging impact with the accompanying spring student survey data similarly highlighting positive improvement in all areas compared with the responses from 2018/19.

Points of detail were answered and clarified as necessary and the update was noted.

709.1.4 Teaching, Learning & Assessment: Interim Report

An overview was provided of the year-to-date position following teaching and learning observations between September 2018 to 14th February 2019, along with a summary of specific strengths and areas for improvement, and the support strategies in place.

After observing those items discussed elsewhere on the agenda (Minutes 709.1.1 and 709.1.2 refer), members were advised:

- Of the 93% current completion rate for first observations for classroom-based learning across College, confirming valid reasons existed in all instances with follow-up action in place. Responding to questioning, it was noted that of the observations, 83% were judged to be overall effective, compared to 79% at the same time last year with twenty-three tutors judged to be 'not yet effective' to varying degrees, compared to forty-four during the same period.
- That the current completion rate for first observations for Apprenticeship provision was 83%, explaining that the 2 outstanding first observations concerned new members of staff for whom their first probation observation had not been due at the time; and that 70% of observations were judged to be overall effective.

Whilst the improvement on the position reported for 2017/18 was recognised and commended, there was question and challenge of:

- The proportion of classroom-based learning tutors judged to be 'not yet effective'. Whilst the robust performance management targeted CPD and dedicated support strategies in place were acknowledged, members queried the likelihood of any impact on their students. Confirmation was welcomed of appropriate classroom-based support provided in parallel with and for the duration that performance improvement measures remained in place.
- The proportion of Apprenticeship provision tutors judged to be 'not yet effective', noting the small number within the cohort and the same improvement strategies in place.

Following consideration, the report was noted.

709.2 Enrolment

Reporting on developments since last discussed, members noted the current student numbers and the reduced allocation envisaged for the 2019/20 academic year as a result. After noting the position to date and the continuing action to mitigate the shortfall in advance of the year-end, discussion focused on 2019/20 applications and conversion rates. Reviewing:

- Those curriculum areas reported to have declined, particularly applications in Tourism compared to the previous year and the 300% decline over three years. There was question of the potential reasons for such an overall drop in demand. Observing the good reputation and quality of provision, members were advised that the decline was considered reflective of a sector-wide downturn in demand generally. Responding to questioning and after advising of a more fundamental change in consumer behaviour identified with the use of third-party

agencies being replaced by on-line bookings, it was confirmed that a review of provision was being undertaken.

- Conversion rates, noting that whilst these showed overall a decline the subjects with the highest and lowest conversion rates were virtually the same as in the previous year. Questioning where competition was most likely, those subjects also provided by schools were recognised to be one area of vulnerability with more focused marketing to be taking place to ensure balanced information and choice. Members were then advised that letters to schools had been sent out from the Principal and the Chair of the Corporation. The disappointing response was observed following only one reply to the latter, noting that the matter was to be followed up with the Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships should no further responses be forthcoming.

Following discussion, the report was noted.

709.3 Statutory, Policy & Compliance

Reports were received outlining arrangements regarding and confirming the College's compliance with statutory requirements, comprising:

709.3.1 Safeguarding & Prevent Update

An oral report was received from the Committee Chair summarising Safeguarding and Prevent activity for the first term of the new academic year.

Activity to date was summarised with focus on the position with referrals:

- Highlighting that compared to the same period in the previous year, there had been a 45% increase with the vast majority dealt with by the services within the College.
- Reporting that the largest area of referral continued to relate to welfare, more specifically Emotional/psychological concerns.

An overview was provided of the strategies for the addressing of safeguarding issues noting in particular that as the recently designated governor for Mental Health, Mick Dempsey was now a member of the Colleges Mental Health working party; and that it was proposed to submit an application for the Mental Health Kite Mark by the end of the academic year.

After consideration, the update was noted.

709.3.2 Equality & Diversity: Annual Report

Responding to the requirement for the data to be made available on the College website and falling outside of the usual meeting cycle, members were reminded that the College's Equality & Diversity Annual Report for 2017/18 had been circulated by email prior to formal presentation to the Committee.

After confirming that the report reflected how the College met the public sector general and specific equality duties, its contents were reviewed, noting that as presented it represented the final version and was reflective of members' comments.

Following further consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** for the Corporation to:

- **APPROVE RETROSPECTVELY** the Equality & Diversity Annual Report.

710 ANY OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING

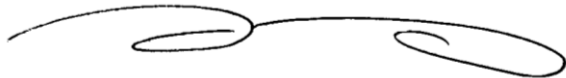
710.1 Any other business

No other business was raised.

710.2 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 22 May 2019

Signed:

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Date: 22 May 2019

Chair